

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 0581

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (DENT), PFOR, EGEN, BU

SUBJECT: SECRETARY DENT'S CALL ON ZHIVKOV

BRUSSELS FOR SECRETARY DENT'S PARTY

FOLLOWING IS UNCLEARED DRAFT SUMMARY OF CONVERSATION
OF SECRETARY DENT WITH BULGARIAN PRESIDENT ZHIVKOV.

1. SECRETARY OF COMMERCE DENT WAS RECEIVED BY BULGARIAN
PRESIDENT ZHIVKOV AT VRANA GUEST HOUSE APRIL 15. IN
ADDITION TO AMBASSADOR HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY BENNETT
(TREASURY), ARMITAGE (STATE), AND BOWDEN (COMMERCE).
ON BULGARIAN SIDE FONMIN MLADENOV, MINFORTRADE NEDEV
AND HIS DEPUTY LUKANOV, AND AMB-DESIGNATE POPOV WERE
ALSO PRESENT. ZHIVKOV APPEARED PLEASED THAT SECRETARY
DENT HAD ALTERED HIS TRAVEL SCHEDULE TO MAKE THIS CALL,
AND THE CONVERSATION WAS RELAXED AND FRIENDLY BUT FRANK
AND FORTHRIGHT THROUGHOUT.

2. SECRETARY DENT CONVEYED PRESIDENT NIXON'S BEST
WISHES AND HIS GRATIFICATION AT IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS
OVER PAST YEAR AS EVIDENCED BY CONCLUSION OF CONSULAR
CONVENTION, BETTER TREATMENT OF U.S. IN BULGARIAN PRESS
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AND EXPANSION OF COMMERCIAL AND OTHER CONTACTS.

EXPLAINING SITUATION IN CONGRESS REGARDING TRADE LEGISLATION AND MFN AUTHORIZATION, HE NOTED THAT WHILE SOME THINGS CANNOT NOW BE DONE BECAUSE OF THAT SITUATION, A GREAT DEAL COULD BE DONE EVEN NOW IN COMMERCIAL AREA. NEW ECONOMIC COUNCIL OF JOINT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COULD ALSO HELP TO EXPAND TRADE AND COOPERATIVE ENDEAVORS.

3. ZHIVKOV EVIDENCED APPARENT DESIRE TO MOVE U.S. - BULGARIAN RELATIONS FORWARD, MENTIONING "SPIRIT OF THE NEW TIMES" AND AT ONE POINT STRESSING THAT THIS WAS FIRST TIME IN POSTWAR PERIOD THAT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN US COULD TAKE PLACE IN SUCH A FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE. HE OUTLINED RAPID PLANNED GROWTH OF BULGARIAN ECONOMY WHICH WOULD HAVE CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAM OF \$30-32 BILLION IN NEXT FIVE YEAR PLAN (INCREASE OF OVER 50 PERCENT OVER PREVIOUS PLAN, IN CONSTANT DOLLAR TERMS). CHARACTERIZING IT AS "LEAP FORWARD" HE NOTED BULGARIAN DESIRE TO HAVE ENERGETIC U.S. PARTICIPATION AND INTENT TO SHIFT MAJOR BULGARIAN PROCUREMENT IN NON-SOCIALIST WORLD FROM CUSTOMARY WESTERN EUROPEAN TRADE PARTNERS TO U.S. REMARKING BULGARIA -- AS U.S. OF COURSE -- COULD DO WITHOUT OTHER'S TRADE, HE UNDERLINED NEED FOR BULGARIA TO KNOW FAIRLY SOON WHERE IT COULD BUY AS NEXT FIVE-YEAR PLAN IS MORE FULLY FORMULATED. HE CAME BACK TO MFN REPEATEDLY AS ELEMENT ON WHICH "ALL DEPENDS" BUT EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT PRESIDENT COULD COPE WITH PROBLEMS PRESENTED IN CONGRESSIONAL SITUATION. HE DISCUSSED IN SOME SPECIFICS POSSIBLE DEALS WITH KAISER CORP. IN ALUMINUM AND CEMENT (DID NOT MENTION STEEL AND SHIPBUILDING) AND INSISTED BULGARIA WAS GOING TO FORGE AHEAD OF ITS EE NEIGHBORS AND WAS PREPARED TO CONSTRUCT PLANTS OR COMPLEXES AS LARGE AS THOSE IN U.S. AND USSR. THIS MADE SENSE ECONOMICALLY BECAUSE BULGARIA HAS ASSURED MARKET IN USSR, FOR WHATEVER IT DOES NOT SELL ELSEWHERE.

4. ZHIVKOV WAS AT SOME PAINS TO STRESS THAT IMPROVEMENTS OF U.S. - BULGARIAN RELATIONS WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE AT EXPENSE OF SOVIET - BULGARIAN RELATIONS NOR OF INTERNAL BULGARIAN SYSTEM. EXPLAINED THAT BULGARIA HAD "JOINED

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HANDS WITH ONE OF WORLD'S GIANTS (USSR) AND DEVELOPED RELATIONS ON LARGE SCALE"; NOW WANTED TO COOPERATE TO DEGREE POSSIBLE WITH OTHER GIANT (U.S.) ON BASIS RECOGNITION OF DIFFERENT SYSTEMS, AND VISIT OF SECRETARY PLAYED DEFINITE ROLE IN DIRECTION OF EXPANDING SUCH COOPERATION. HE REJECTED VIEW THOSE SENATORS WHO FELT U.S. COULD CHANGE SOCIALIST ORDER IN BULGARIA AND DENOUNCED THE INTERFERENCE IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS WHICH

HE SAID MFN/EMIGRATION AMENDMENT REPRESENTED. AT ANOTHER POINT HE ACKNOWLEDGED POSSIBLE INFLUENCE ON BULGARIANS OF OUTSIDE IDEAS BUT SAID REGIME IS SO STRONGLY ESTABLISHED THAT IT SAW NO RISKS IN FOREIGN CONTACTS AND "WE ARE NOT AFRAID OF PROPAGANDA".

5. WHEN SECRETARY REMARKED ON PRESIDENT NIXON'S ASSURED PLACE IN HISTORY FOR CONTINUING CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE, ZHIVKOV ECHOED SIMILAR VIEW AND ASKED SECRETARY TO CONVEY HIS BEST REGARDS TO PRESIDENT AND TELL HIM "WE'D BE HAPPY TO MEET HIM HERE AT ANY TIME".

6. SECRETARY DENT POINTED OUT CONCERNS IN OUR CONGRESS IN CONNECTION WITH TRADE LEGISLATION DO NOT RELATE TO ECONOMIC SYSTEM BUT STEM FROM HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS, AND IN CONNECTION WITH THE EMIGRATION ISSUE REFERRED TO U.S. CONCERNS RE DIVIDED FAMILIES. NOTED UNDESIRABILITY OF LETTING THESE PROBLEMS, SMALL IN THEMSELVES BUT LARGE IN IMPORTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS, CREATE NEEDLESS COMPLICATIONS ALSO IN OUR CONGRESS. ZHIVKOV REPLIED THIS WAS NO PROBLEM, OLD PEOPLE COULD JOIN THEIR SPOUSES, BULGARIA WOULD THEREBY SAVE MONEY, AND HE "COULD ORDER TOMORROW TO LET THEM GO". (LATER SAME DAY BULGARIAN FONOFF OFFICIAL ASKED EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICER TO PRESENT UP-TO-DATE LIST OF DIVIDED FAMILIES TO FONOFF AS SOON AS CONVENIENT.)

7. ZHIVKOV SAID HE DID NOT EXPECT DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN U.S. AND BULGARIA TO BE "ALL HONEY AND BUTTER" BECAUSE OF DIFFERENT IDEOLOGIES, AND "NO DOUBT THERE WILL BE CRITICISM ON BOTH SIDES", BUT BULGARIA HAS SET ITS COURSE AND WILL PURSUE IT AND WILL MAKE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS "BUT DON'T EXPECT US TO GIVE

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UP OUR IDEOLOGY". SECRETARY DENT SAID OVERRIDING INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES MUST BE TO CONTRIBUTE TO WORLD PEACE AND BUILD A BETTER LIFE FOR THEIR PEOPLES. THERE IS NO INCOMPATIBILITY BETWEEN BULGARIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USSR AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. ON A BROADER BASIS.
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